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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: BASRAH GOVERNOR: "I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE"

REF: (A) BASRAH 53; (B) BASRAH 58; (C) BASRAH 59

CLASSIFIED BY: Ken Gross, Regional Coordinator, REO Basrah,
Department of State.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Basrah Governor Muhammad al-Wa'eli met with the Regional Coordinator (RC) for the Regional Embassy Office Basrah on April 23 and discussed the move afoot to vote him out of office and replace him with another Basrah Provincial Council (BPC) member. (See Refs A - C.) Stressing his and the Fadillah party's strict adherence to the democratic process, he said the BPC members opposed to him had only 20 votes, far short of that needed to oust him from the governorship. The Governor said "for sure, they will not be able to get two-thirds of the council to remove me, and that is the only lawful way to do so."

¶2. (C) Governor Muhammad, alluding to a possible extra-legal attempt to remove him from office, said he would not let anyone oppose democracy. "I came in to office through democratic means, and when I leave office it will be through the democratic process," he said. The Governor stated he would stay in office since much more needs to be done for Basrah. He said that he had been nominated to serve in one of the ministries in Baghdad, but was turning it down to remain and focus more attention on Basrah.

¶3. (C) Comment: The Governor's professed support for the democratic process is less than convincing. Many people in Basrah blame the Governor for the continued high level of violence in Basrah and allege that he is directly involved or, at a minimum, ineffective in dealing with it. There is a strong division in the BPC between his supporters and the rest of the members, and the resulting paralysis of the BPC has caused it to cease functioning as an effective governing body. Though the Governor talks tough about retaining his office, public dissatisfaction, combined with the political aspirations of his opponents, could mean an early end to his tenure.

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